

Diving at TWA
flight 800 crash site.

Forgotten Mission: Military Support to the Nation

U.S. Navy (Charles L. Withrow)

By DAVID L. GRANGE and RODNEY L. JOHNSON

Throughout U.S. history the military has been used to suppress insurrection and rebellion, enforce the law, and perform various other roles at the request of Federal, state, and local officials. The role of the Armed Forces in crises is mandated under the Constitution and has been exercised since the Shay Debtor Rebellion in 1786.

While support to the Nation is often overshadowed by the high-profile role of defending it, military support is a critical, long-standing mission that continues to grow. This is revealed by the number and variety of domestic disasters and events to which the Department of Defense

(DOD) has responded in recent years. Extensive support by the services and defense agencies is important to minimizing loss of life and property in a range of operations which frequently go unpublicized. This article outlines responsibilities for Federal support, the system which facilitates that support, and the extent of DOD assistance in selected domestic operations.

Federal Responsibilities

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution states, "Congress shall have power . . . to provide for calling forth the militia to execute laws of the Union, suppress insurrection, and repel invasions." Article IV, section 4 expands this authority: "The United States shall guarantee to every state in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them . . . against domestic violence." The modern authorization for Federal support to civil authorities is based on the Robert

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T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (public law 93-288) and the Economy Act. The former enables the Federal Government to “provide assistance to U.S. states, territories, and possessions to alleviate suffering and mitigate damage resulting from major disasters and civil emergencies.” The latter empowers Federal agencies to provide routine support to each other under certain conditions if reimbursed. The key agency for emergency assistance to civil authorities is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). By executive order the President appointed FEMA as the lead Federal agency (LFA) for disaster and emergency assistance and as proponent for the Federal response plan (FRP). Published in 1992, that plan details how 28 Federal

departments and agencies will supplement state and local government responses.

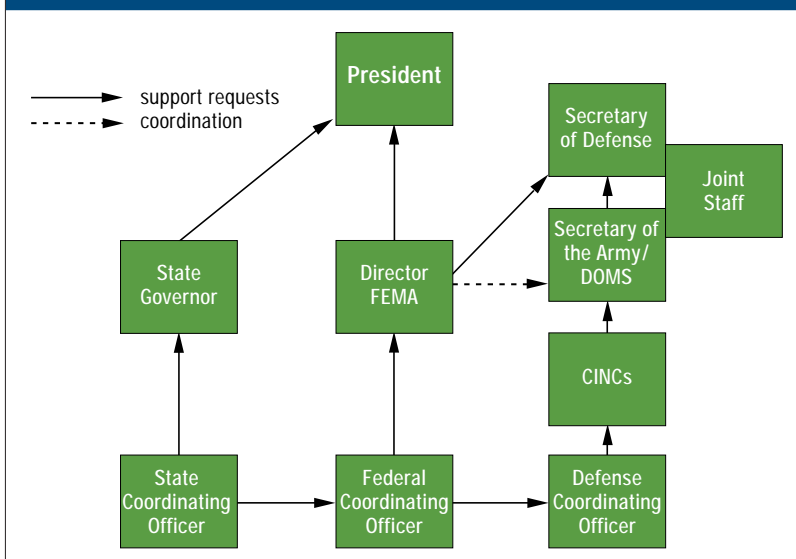
In order to manage Federal assistance, FRP classifies assistance into 12 emergency support functions and assigns primary responsibility for them (see figure 1). DOD is the primary agency for public works and engineering and has named the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as operating agent for planning, preparedness, and response. In addition, DOD provides support to designated lead agencies in responding to all other functions. FEMA is also tasked as LFA for consequence management, defined as actions taken to provide an immediate response to an incident to contain and mitigate its effects. By contrast, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is LFA for crisis management, defined as measures to resolve a hostile situation, investigate, and prepare a criminal case for prosecution under Federal law.

When a domestic disaster occurs, the first relief assistance is provided by the local police, fire departments, and rescue organizations. Depending on the severity of the disaster, the next level of aid is normally through state disaster relief organizations that can call upon all state assets. The governor will appoint a state coordinating officer (figure 2) in major disasters and can also put the National Guard on state active duty which is a tremendous asset and is used extensively in most states. As an example, the daily employment average for National Guard assets in FY96 was 1,760 man-days. The governor may request help from the President when local needs exceed state resources. When required, FEMA will appoint a coordinating officer to correlate Federal disaster relief assistance. FEMA and that officer then function as the vital link between state requirements and DOD assistance.

Figure 1. Federal Response Plan

Support Function	Lead Agency
transportation	Department of Transportation
communications	National Communications System
public works and engineering	Department of Defense
firefighting	Department of Agriculture
information and planning	Federal Emergency Management Agency
mass care	American Red Cross
resource support	General Services Administration
health/medical services	Department of Health and Human Services
urban search and rescue	Federal Emergency Management Agency
hazardous materials	Environmental Protection Agency
food	Department of Agriculture
energy	Department of Energy

Figure 2. Disaster Support Relationships



Organization

The Secretary of Defense delegates authority to provide military support for civil authorities to the Secretary of the Army who, as executive agent, exercises operational control over all DOD components including the services and defense agencies. Specific requirements include developing planning guidance, plans, and procedures for military support; tasking components to plan for and commit resources in response to requests from civil authorities; and developing (and tasking DOD components to develop) generic and incident-specific support plans. The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Logistics, and Environment is responsible for oversight of military support to civil authorities (MSCA). The Directorate of Military Support (DOMS) is the DOD action agent for planning and coordinating this support on behalf of the Secretary of the Army.

DOMS and the Military Support Division essentially function as a joint staff

DOMS is led by an Army major general who is also the director of operations, readiness, and mobilization in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Headquarters, Department of the Army. DOMS and its designated staff element, the Military Support Division, essentially function as a joint staff, with both Air Force and Navy one-star officers serving as deputy directors. The DOMS staff has the responsibility to plan, coordinate, and manage the full range of MSCA operations. It routinely coordinates with FEMA and the other Federal departments and agencies and also participates in interagency disaster relief exercises. In this capacity its staff is represented on the FEMA catastrophic disaster response group executive committee.



Fighting forest fires in
Clear Lake, California.

U.S. Air Force (Val Gempis)

The executive agent has designated the commanders in chief of U.S. Atlantic Command (ACOM), U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), and U.S. Southern Command as the DOD operating agents for MSCA for states, territories, and possessions in their areas of responsibility. ACOM, with the contiguous 48 states, assigns lead operational authority (LOA) to its Army component, Forces Command (FORSCOM), which accordingly can task other ACOM component commands. Moreover, in coordination with DOMS and the Joint Staff, it can task supporting CINCs such as U.S. Transportation Command and supporting defense agencies.

Both PACOM and FORSCOM have designated defense coordinating officers (DCOs) for states and territories in their respective areas of

responsibility. When deployed these officers, who are usually Army colonels, are the DOD representatives on the ground with authority to validate all requests for support. They forward validated requests to either a joint task force (JTF) or response task force (RTF), if constituted, or to higher headquarters. DOMS will then staff the request and if appropriate task a defense element to provide the support.

JTFs are normally formed for command and control of operations when significant forces from more than one service are deployed. Recent examples of JTFs include the Los Angeles riots (1992), Hurricane Andrew (1992), and the Olympics (1996). RTFs are formed to support Federal responses to terrorist incidents which involve weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The elements of RTFs were prepositioned during the Olympics and the last Presidential inauguration.

Standing and Directed Missions

The Secretary of the Army has seven standing missions as the executive agent for support. They include disaster relief, wildland fire fighting, civil disturbances, immigration emergencies, postal disruptions, animal disease eradication, and military assistance to safety and traffic (MAST). Among them, support to the Postal Service during labor disputes is potentially the most personnel-intensive albeit the least likely. If fully implemented, more than 190,000 military personnel would be committed to safeguard, process, and deliver mail. The MAST program provides aeromedical evacuation for civilian communities. Army and Air Force medical evacuation units have flown in excess of 100,000 hours since the program began in 1973. Any disaster requires a swift response to minimize suffering and loss of life, and military units are ideally suited for this role. DOD has supported more than 200 domestic disaster relief operations since 1975. It also supports Federal fire fighting efforts. For example, more than 1,200 active duty soldiers and marines fought fires in California and Oregon during 1996. Military assistance in civil disturbances is probably the most sensitive mission since use of the Armed Forces to reestablish law and order requires involvement at the highest national level. The last mission of this type was conducted in 1992 when 13,000 active duty and Army National Guard personnel were employed in efforts to restore order in the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

In addition to standing missions, the Secretary of the Army also executes directed domestic support missions. The Atlanta Olympics set a precedent for the level of both military and civilian agency contingency support. DOD support

included 14,653 active and National Guard personnel from 47 states and territories, over 300 aviation support missions, and more than 300,000 items of equipment for use by state and local authorities.

Planning for the Presidential inauguration in January 1997 involved six months of intense work by DOMS. Although the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee is historically responsible for

DOD support to civil authorities is requested almost daily

routine military support to the inaugural, the Secretary of the Army was responsible for ensuring a coordinated DOD response for contingency operations during that period. Critical tasks included development and coordination of command, control, and communication procedures for possible contingency operations; interagency meetings to clarify responsibilities and support requirements; execution of a tabletop exercise for 80 action-level attendees from numerous agencies to discuss, clarify, and coordinate roles; conduct of a decision session to finalize plans in November 1996; and distribution of an execute order outlining extensive DOD requirements.

The latest directed mission is implementation of the Nunn-Lugar II Domestic Preparedness legislation. The Defense against Weapons of Mass Destruction Act of 1996 requires the Secretary of Defense to execute a program to enhance Federal, state, and local agency capabilities to respond to incidents involving WMD. As DOD executive agent, the Secretary of the Army is tasked with developing and implementing guidance, plans, and procedures to establish a coordinated national program. As action agent, DOMS is initiating extensive interagency coordination and planning to sustain this program. Specific tasks include providing emergency response training, advice, and assistance; activating a chemical-biological hotline; assisting in the development and maintenance of rapid response teams; testing and evaluating preparedness; helping in the inventory of physical equipment and assets; and procuring equipment to interdict WMD movement.

DOMS is charged with integrating all capabilities in a consolidated program and is currently staffing additional guidance on timelines, budget procedures, reporting requirements, and specific responsibilities associated with the above tasks. The Secretary of the Army recently appointed the Army Chemical Biological Defense Command to implement the program. Other key assets include the Marine Corps Chemical and Biological Incident Response Force, Naval Medical Research Institute, Air Force Technical Application Center, and Army Technical Escort Unit.

Requests for Support

DOD support to civil authorities is requested almost daily. While most requests come from the appropriate LFA, some are received directly from local civilian or state authorities and directed to the right channels. In an ideal world requests would be submitted formally in writing, but swift response is often essential and DOMS begins to coordinate requests after an initial phone contact. The entry point for written requests is the Office of the Executive Secretary which processes them, conducts an initial evaluation, and forwards the requests to the Secretary of the Army for action. By exception all requests related to counterterrorism are forwarded to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict for evaluation and action.

DOMS is tasked to ensure that requests are staffed with all the parties concerned and that any action meets six criteria: legality (authorization and applicability of *posse comitatus*); lethality (use of force by or against military personnel); risk (safety of personnel); cost (responsibility for expenditures and their budget impact); readiness (implication for performing primary mission); and appropriateness (mission best served by DOD or other means). Requests are coordinated with the Joint Staff, services, general counsel, and supported commands which provide support as well as supporting commands and defense agencies. Once coordination is complete, DOMS is responsible for finalizing the execute order and submitting it to the appropriate official for approval.

The Secretary of the Army can approve most requests for DOD support as executive agent; however, the Secretary of Defense must personally approve responses in cases of terrorism or civil disturbance, use of CINC-assigned forces, and support to law enforcement when confrontation or use of lethal force is anticipated. For requests which require approval by the Secretary of Defense, DOMS prepares a recommended course of action and forwards it to the Secretary through the Joint Staff and Chairman. Following a decision, the Chairman will send the order through DOMS to the appropriate CINC for execution and management by the Secretary of the Army.

Such support to civil authorities is extensive and occurs on an almost daily basis. The eight most extensive support requirements during FY95 and FY96 are summarized in figure 3. It should be noted, however, that DOMS spends considerable time coordinating relatively small yet critical requests for particular types of expertise or equipment. This support is normally requested when it would be too costly to procure the skill or equipment required for one-time use or when timeliness does not allow for normal procurement. Recent cases include a technical escort unit to



Figure 3. DOD Support to Civil Authorities, Selected Operations: 1995–1997

Event	Date	(peak DOD strength)		
		Active Duty	National Guard	Corps of Engineers
Oklahoma Bombing	April–May 1995	457	545	48
Hurricane Marilyn	September–November 1995	1,227	930	200
Summer Olympics	June–August 1996	1,277	13,376	–
TWA Flight 800	July–November 1996	740	170	22
National Conventions	August 1996	328	1,397	–
Western Forest Fires	August–September 1996	1,265	930	–
Hurricane Fran	September–November 1996	756	4,134	397
Presidential Inaugural	January 1997	4,736	540	–

support a Ricin chemical agent seizure by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Missouri; engineer support after a dam break in New Hampshire; personnel and metal detectors to conduct a search by the Secret Service for counterfeit money in Michigan; and providing air transport for FEMA urban search and rescue teams responding to disasters. Every request must be properly staffed to ensure that the support is appropriate and not in violation of *posse comitatus* (title 18, U.S. Code, strictly prohibits the use of Federal troops for law enforcement).

Hurricane Fran

The hurricane that struck near Cape Fear, North Carolina, on the evening of September 5, 1996 had maximum sustained winds of 115 mph. Although its strength quickly diminished, in the next 12 hours it caused 26 deaths, severe flooding from up to 15 inches of rain, \$1.5 billion in damage, and a power loss to 800,000 households across five states.

The response to Fran started prior to its actual arrival. FEMA (the lead Federal agency) and DOMS began 24-hour operations at 0700 hours on September 4. That same day DOMS received five formal taskings for DOD support and released an execute order for it at 2000 hours with the commander in chief, ACOM, tasked

as supported CINC. Initial actions required a C-141 to move a prepositioned forward assessment team from Texas to North Carolina on September 5, the use of Fort Jackson to billet and support the emergency response team-national until mission completion, and nine helicopters to transport the team and support other missions. All missions were completed as required prior to the arrival of the hurricane.



U.S. Air National Guard (Mark A. Moore)

Oklahoma City,
April 1995.

DOMS coordinated all support operations directly with FEMA until September 6 when the President issued a major disaster declaration for portions of North Carolina. At that time ACOM deployed a DCO and a disaster coordination element (DCE) to Fort Bragg to handle requirements for support. Until it stood down on September 28, DCE coordinated all support and forwarded requests to higher headquarters or DOMS only when they exceeded local capabilities. Ultimately DOMS worked 16 formal requests for support prior to ceasing 24-hour operations on September 9.

DOD support to Fran recovery operations was extensive and critical to minimizing the loss of life and suffering. Peak strength included 756 active duty soldiers, 4,134 National Guardsmen from eight states on active duty, and 397 members of the Corps of Engineers. The majority of

active duty support was provided by DCO and DCE from the Federal mobilization site at Fort Bragg and also by elements of XVIII Airborne Corps which removed debris and provided relief assistance. Of particular note was support by the Corps of Engineers that included damage surveys, power restoration, water and ice delivery, dredging operations, and debris removal. As of November 13, it had taken away 3,411,695 cubic yards of debris, provided over 200 generators for emergency power, and delivered some 3.5 millions pounds of ice and 550,000 gallons of water. In addition, the Corps of Engineers dredge *McFarland* removed 170,000 cubic yards of material in efforts to clear Wilmington harbor.

Oklahoma City

The bomb that was detonated outside the Alfred Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995 resulted in 167 dead, 467 injured, and two missing. Unlike a hurricane there was no warning. The event highlighted the ability to provide technical support on extremely short notice in support of civil authorities. Fort Sill dispatched two medical evacuation helicopters and Tinker Air Force Base deployed a 66-man rescue squad. Under his immediate response authority, the Secretary of the Army directed DOMS to establish the 24-hour crisis action team one hour after the explosion and sent a liaison officer to FEMA headquarters. DOD ultimately provided technical support and equipment to many agencies including the Federal Bureau of Investigation as LFA for crisis management and FEMA as LFA for consequence management.

DOMS received its first request for support three hours after the bombing when FEMA requested transportation for an urban search and rescue team from Phoenix. An airborne C-141 from McCord Air Force Base was immediately diverted to Luke Air Force Base to support the team tasking and further actions were initiated in anticipation of a Presidential declaration of emergency. Following the declaration later in the day, DOMS staffed and issued an execute order tasking the commander in chief, ACOM, as supported CINC. DCO and the nucleus of DCE arrived at 1800 (eight hours after the blast) and began coordinating all on-site requirements for support. The team from Phoenix reached the site at 2130 and other support arrived throughout the night.

Although the last formal request for support was received on April 29, DOD continued to assist in rescue and law enforcement efforts until the end of May. The peak strength reached 1,002 personnel and included a large amount of aviation and ground transport, specialized equipment with operators, and life support items.



Air National Guard

Standing watch
at Olympic games.

Olympic Games

During the Olympic games, held from July 19 to August 4, 1996 at 96 venues in four states and the District of Columbia, the focus of planning was on Atlanta. It was there that organizers projected 300,000–600,000 visitors per day as well as the presence of 40,000 volunteers and 15,000 media. As could be expected, the competition set a precedent for the level of support requested and provided by DOD and other Federal agencies.

DOD planning was initiated in response to a memo issued by the Secretary of the Army in August 1995 that outlined a framework for support. The Secretary was also

designated executive agent for all DOD support, and DOMS was tasked as the action agent for executing all missions involving the Olympics. In addition, the commanding general, FORSCOM, was tasked to furnish general officer oversight and a task force commander. The specific mission was twofold: provide DOD non-emergency support and prepare to execute appropriate emergency contingency plans to assist civil authorities.

The impact of support to the Olympics was significant. More than 14,000 active, Reserve, and National Guard personnel were directly committed in Atlanta and other sites. The majority of military personnel were members of the Army National Guard from 47 states and territories who supported security operations at the 96 venues. More than a thousand active duty soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen transported athletes, officials, and law enforcement personnel among various Olympic villages and widely dispersed venues.

The military flew over 300 missions in support of law enforcement and security operations. DOD also provided more than 300,000 items of equipment and supplies to more than 60 Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and organizing committees. Bomb disposal personnel responded to 490 calls about suspicious items. Logistical support was provided to DOD personnel at nine base camps by a joint logistical task force with 1,300 members.

**more than 14,000 personnel
were directly committed
in Atlanta and other sites**

A tremendous effort was made to ensure a coordinated, immediate response for emergency contingency operations. Assets prepositioned and/or forward deployed to the Atlanta area for the Olympics included 26 explosive ordnance disposal teams, three chemical-biological technical escort units, a response task force advance element, DCO and DCE liaison officers, FORSCOM and First Army emergency operation centers, helicopters for current and on-call missions, and a chemical-biological pharmaceutical package.

Moreover, DOD developed detailed plans to ensure that critical assets were readily available for deployment to the area. This included a response task force, chemical-biological advisory and response teams, chemical-biological laboratory and diagnostics capability, added air evacuation and medical triage teams, and other specialty assets. Clearly, DOD support was essential to the success of one of the largest and most complex peacetime events of this century.

TWA 800

On July 17, 1996 a flight bound for Paris exploded in midair and crashed off Long Island with the loss of all 230 passengers and crew members on board shortly after it took off from JFK International Airport in New York. This tragedy highlights the ability to provide a range of multi-service technical support and specialized equipment.

The National Transportation Safety Board was designated LFA while the Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted a collateral investigation. The first military support was provided almost immediately by the New York National Guard which activated an emergency operations center and dispatched a C-130 with illumination flares and a helicopter with forward-looking infrared radar. Support was coordinated, approved, and funded by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. The National Guard continued to provide support over the next three months with a peak strength of 170 personnel, two helicopters, and 27 vehicles. Its critical support included assisting in search and recovery, roving patrols, cleanup and sustainment, and passive security which was provided under state authority at the governor's direction.

The Navy received its first request for support in accordance with a memo of understanding between the Navy supervisor of salvage and the National Transportation Safety Board. Under that agreement, a pinger locator system, side scan sonar mapping system, remotely operated vehicle, salvage ship (*USS Grasp*), search vessel (*MV Pirouette*), and 53 divers were provided initially.

On July 22 the FBI requested a helicopter and non-flying crew chief for the investigation.



U.S. Navy (Gordon Peterson)

Retrieving parts of
TWA flight 800
fuselage.Diver inspecting
crash site.

U.S. Navy (Mark M. Reinhard)

The National Guard Bureau coordinated for the Delaware Army National Guard to execute this mission. A forensic anthropologist from the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology was provided to assist with autopsies and identify remains. In addition, the Corps of Engineers furnished a barge to collect drift from the wreckage.

Ultimately, support to the crash site continued to increase, and DOMS staffed and issued an execute order approved by the Secretary of the Army on July 23 which designated the commander in chief, ACOM, as the supported CINC for site operations. He, in turn, tasked the commander in chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet as supported CINC

and directed the establishment of a disaster relief task force to assume operational control. Over the next two months this structure provided extensive support to recovery operations and aided in the eventual recovery of the remains of 213 victims and 95 percent of the aircraft. Navy strength at the site peaked at 740 and included 140 divers.

The Armed Forces are trained and equipped to provide immediate response during disaster and emergency response operations. In fact, in many cases DOD is the only Federal agency that can immediately provide some kinds of support. The military clearly recognizes the importance of this mission; however, there is a price to pay. Time, personnel, training, and funds spent for such support compete with our limited assets. Leaders on all levels must weigh the impact of such missions on their organizations and make the necessary adjustments. Support to the Nation is a demanding mission that the military must continue to plan for and execute.

JFQ